

**COUNCIL MEETING
10th November, 2021**

Present:- The Mayor (Councillor Jenny Andrews) (in the Chair); Councillors Alam, Allen, Atkin, Aveyard, Bacon, Baker-Rogers, Ball, Barley, Baum-Dixon, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, Burnett, A .Carter, C. Carter, Castledine-Dack, Clark, Collingham, Cooksey, Cowen, Cusworth, Elliott, Ellis, Fisher, Griffin, Hague, Haleem, Hoddinott, Hughes, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Mills, Miro, Monk, Pitchley, Read, Reynolds, Roche, Sansome, Sheppard, Singleton, Thompson, Tinsley, Whomersley, Wooding and Wyatt.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

66. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor was sad to learn of the passing of former Consort, Kingsley Jack, last month and would be attending the funeral later this month. Kingsley was Consort between May 2005 and 2006. The Council's condolences go out to his family.

The Mayor also confirmed she was keeping the venue for the next Council meeting under review along with any mitigations required in any return to the Council Chamber. Rotherham Covid case rates continued to be the highest in South Yorkshire and, therefore, it was necessary to continue to monitor the situation ahead of any decision being taken. Apologies were given to Members who felt they were being inconvenienced by the current arrangements for Council, but it was a matter of safety.

The Mayor welcomed the opportunity to report on a number of engagements:-

- Attendance on 30th September for the Queen's Award for Innovation Presentation by the Lord Lieutenant to the Marsden Weighing Machine Group for their revolutionary Patient Transfer Scale. In 2016, Marsden partnered with the NHS to bring the device to market and it was now sold worldwide and helping to improve patient outcomes.
- 5th October saw the installation of the Master Cutler, Mr. James Tear, in Sheffield.
- 9th and 10th October was the re-opening of Rotherham's Cancer Care Unit, which had been closed during the pandemic, on Badsley Moor Lane, and then the Wakefield Mayor's Civic Service and Parade on the Saturday with the Sheffield Lord Mayor's Civic Service on the Sunday.

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- 14th October involved an evening of music and entertainment courtesy of The Dinnington Operatic Society, who performed a revue show entitled 'It's Time for a Musical'.
- 16th October saw the Mayor's Charity Ball at Magna which was a wonderful evening and a tremendous success and grateful thanks were given to everyone who helped to organise it and to those who came along on the evening.
- Respects were paid at the Yorkshire Miners' Memorial Service in Barnsley on 17th October.
- 20th October saw the Naval Regional Commander's Official Reception and Demonstration evening in Leeds, aimed at promoting the work of regional maritime organisations.
- An update was held with a representative from the Yorkshire Regiment on 21st October and heard about what they had been doing and about their future plans.
- Voluntary Action Rotherham health engagement stall was also visited in the market as part of their Breast Cancer Awareness event.
- Attendance at the Rotherham United versus Milton Keynes football match on 23rd October which Rotherham won 3-0.
- Attendance at the Centenary Dinner hosted by the Dinnington Branch of the Royal British Legion.
- Back to the indoor market again on 28th October for the launch of the poppy appeal handing out awards and admiring the poppy cascade.
- Later saw the live draw for the Women's Euros 2022 followed by the Lord Lieutenant Awards Ceremony at Endcliffe Hall, Sheffield, for the Reserve Forces and Cadets Association for Yorkshire and the Humber.
- This month saw the opening of the recently refurbished activity room at Rush House on 5th November meeting staff and residents.
- Attendance at the Installation of the Dean of Sheffield, Reverend Canon Abigail Thompson, at Sheffield Cathedral on 6th November.
- Attendance at Maltby Miners Memorial Dedication on Maltby High Street. The memorial was planned some years ago to be dedicated to the local miners and its completion had been held up by the pandemic.

- Armistice Day would be on the 11th November joining Reverend Batchford and the Royal British Legion to observe two minutes' silence at 11.00 a.m. in All Saints Square.
- 14th November would be in Clifton Park for Remembrance Sunday where both the parade and service would be held.

67. ANNOUNCEMENT OF MAYOR'S CADETS

The Mayor formally announced the names of her Cadets for the Municipal and Civic Year 2021/22 to the Council:-

- Sea Cadets - Cadet 1st Class Brooke Matthewman
- Royal Air Force Cadets – Corporal Matthew Burkinshaw
- Army Cadets – Courtney Martin

The Mayor invited each Cadet down in turn to receive their Mayor's Cadet badge and certificate.

68. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Barker, Havard, Hunter, Wilson and Yasseen.

69. COMMUNICATIONS

There were none to report.

70. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING

Resolved: - That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 29th September, 2021, be approved for signature by the Mayor.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester declared he was not voting on Minute No. 51 on the basis of involvement of a close relative's construction company.

Mover: - Councillor Read

Seconder: - Councillor Allen

71. PETITIONS

There were no Petitions to report.

72. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest to report.

73. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(1) Mr. D.S. asked did this Council believe that Child Sexual Exploitation was still happening in Rotherham?

The Leader explained Rotherham, perhaps more than any other Council, knew there would always be perpetrators who targeted children. As of last week the Council's multi-agency support hub was supporting forty children who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation.

In a supplementary question Mr. S. asked, during the period covered by the Jay Report, Rotherham's Children Services continued to be inspected by Ofsted and be rated 'good' so what credence could be given to any Ofsted report for Rotherham given the failings.

The Leader pointed out that Ofsted would inspect and over that period of two decades Rotherham had come on a journey with more understanding about the form of abuse and responses.

From the point of view of services in Rotherham, Ofsted had taken a particular interest, but Rotherham's response to potential child sexual abuse cases was strong. In fact the whole country and even the world were on a journey of improving responses to it.

Rotherham would continue to challenge itself, and along with experts outside the Borough, continued to challenge. The response was strong and children were kept as safe as they could be.

(2) Ms. S.E. was unable to attend the Council Meeting so would receive a response in writing.

(3) Mr. B.C. asked why did the circumstances require the Remembrance Day Parade to be contained within the confines of Clifton Park, with the Parade to march up and down the centre path?

Councillor Sheppard explained last year's parade was held virtually, but was pleased it could go ahead this year. In 2019, the Council was notified by South Yorkshire Police (SYP) that there would be a shift in responsibility for managing parades and it was now for the local Traffic Authority (the Council, not the Police) to decide on the road closure or other legally enforceable traffic management measures it considered any local on-road event to be held. For the Remembrance Day Parade, the Council was both the event organiser and the local Traffic Authority and matters of public safety, security and associated costs rested with RMBC.

When parades were organised, the event organiser assumed liabilities and needed to be satisfied that there was an appropriate plan and resources in place to mitigate risks. This now needed to include use of stewards, volunteers, signs and/or professional traffic management.

On that basis, discussions had been held with the Mayor of Rotherham, Armed Forces Champion, Parade Commander, local Royal British Legion, Vicar of Rotherham Minster and Rotherham MCVC who were all supportive of changing the format to this year's Remembrance Civic event which would utilise Clifton Park:-

- Reduces the need to visit three venues for the event (Town Hall, Minster and Cenotaph).
- Introduces a new shorter, flatter route contained within one centralised space off road at Clifton Park helping to eliminate risks and maintaining the highest levels of safety taking into account the audience, environment and weather conditions.
- Removes the need for the Council to hire in transport.
- Provides individuals with the option of attending the Church Service at Rotherham Minster.

In a supplementary question Mr. C. asked for clarity and prospects of the parade being outside Clifton Park.

Councillor Sheppard explained the parade would remain within Clifton Park and this decision was taken to ensure everyone could take part in the celebrations safely following meetings with other agencies.

74. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no matters requiring exclusion of the press or public.

75. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S STATEMENT

The Leader presented his statement and reported on good news with regards to funding. Two of the Council's three Levelling Up Fund bids had been successful for the Town Centre and Leisure and Skills packages totalling an investment of almost £40 million pounds. These were great projects that should generate economic benefits for residents right across the Borough.

Being largely familiar with the town centre proposals, the Leisure and Skills bid was a creative package that would deliver real economic benefits in communities that needed them:-

- Wentworth Woodhouse would transform its Riding School and Stables to create new hospitality and visitor centres as part of its £130m masterplan to bring new life to one of the country's finest and largest historic houses.
- Thrybergh Country Park would embark on the first stage delivery of its masterplan focused on outdoor education and wellbeing and the creation of a new destination waterside café.
- Close to the Town Centre, Magna would create a suite of new exhibitions which would focus on science, nature and natural materials.

- Rother Valley Country Park would embark on the first stages of a new masterplan focused on physical activity and adventure creating new hospitality and play facilities.
- A new Skills Village at Gullivers Resort focusing on training, development, and accreditation within the hospitality and leisure sector.
- Bridging the gap between school and employment, Maltby Academy Trust would invest in the redevelopment of the former Maltby Grammar School to create an incubator space for training, apprenticeships, and start up support in the leisure and hospitality sectors

Apart from the value to the community, to those that receive training, and the businesses that would be started, it was expected the schemes would deliver more than 100 local jobs. The Council would continue to plug away to secure the investment that communities deserved.

Moreover a bid to National Lottery Heritage Fund had been successful and Rotherham had been awarded £250,000 on behalf of a Northern Consortium which represented a £80,000 return and would fund the cultural programme that would support the celebrations for the Women's Euros next summer.

The UK Community Renewal Fund bid for Children's Capital of Culture was successful providing £1.8m to develop a pilot of the skills and talent development strand of the programme with nine consortium partners, so of course it was great to get Government backing for this exciting and innovative programme to benefit young people.

Everyone who worked on these bids was thanked. If only the Government would fund core services with the enthusiasm it announced grant programmes Rotherham would be in a much better place.

More good news too regarding Rotherham's green spaces. Rother Valley Country Park had collected its first Green Flag Award alongside Clifton, Greasbrough and Ulley Parks that have received one of the coveted awards – the mark of a quality park or green space. This was testament to the hard work and dedication of those who look after the parks.

Finally, Covid had not gone yet and everyone needed to keep well this winter.

The figure as of yesterday was 555.1 per 100,000 and Rotherham was ranked 19th worst in England, with Covid patients in hospital rising by 20% in the last week. Those pressures really were showing in Rotherham Hospital and, contrary to the assertions some had made, the country was very far from being normal.

A period of not more than ten minutes was allowed for questions.

Councillor Bennett-Sylvester welcomed the recognition for green flags for Rotherham parks, but made reference to those Members who came to today's meeting on public transport and asked if the South Yorkshire Mayoral Authority was looking carefully at bus services to areas like Dinnington and other outlying areas and the potential they had.

The Leader agreed there needed to be a drive towards some improvements around bus services. There was a shortage of drivers putting pressure on bus operators making worse the economic problem. There would always be pressure on services and there were a number of measures coming from the Government about bus service improvement plans which the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority agreed.

This would provide some practical improvements at bus stops and live journey and better webpage information some of which would be funded by ourselves and some funding from Government.

A new customer charter which governed responsibilities would be agreed with bus operators and hopefully improve on poor quality service.

There would also be significant investment for improvements to bus lanes and junctions which would help to tackle some of problems with being stuck in traffic.

In excess of £70 million had been secured to make improvements that could be delivered over the next few years. Further funding had also been sought from Government to cap fares which was a whole raft of packages to make travelling on public transport as easy and reliable as possible.

A decision was still to be made on franchising as this would require a significant amount of investment including research so this was still a live debate. With some funding from Government this would give aspirational regulation for buses driving through quality in the future.

76. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETINGS

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 20th September and 18th October, 2021 be received.

Mover: - Councillor Read

Seconder: - Councillor Allen

77. RECOMMENDATION FROM CABINET - FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2020/21 AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Further to Minute No. 22 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 19th July, 2021, consideration was given to the report detailing proposals to update the Capital Programme for 2020-21.

The final outturn position was an underspend against budget of £6.1m following the mitigating actions taken to manage the financial impacts of COVID-19. It incorporated the late receipt of £2m of Government support towards costs associated with Operation Stovewood and after a proposed transfer of £2m to create a new Children and Young Peoples Services Social Care Reserve.

The mitigation actions included the application of Government's provision of £18.9m emergency funding to support the COVID-19 response and cost implications of this, the submission of compensation claims totalling £4.8m relating to the adverse impact of COVID-19 on Sales, Fees and Charges income and the use in 2020/21 of £5.2m from the Control Outbreak Management Fund (COMF.) Without the grant funding streams, the Council's financial outturn would have been a £22.8m overspend.

The report suggested a prudent use of the remaining underspend following its transfer to the Council's reserves. From this underspend, an allocation of £2m was to be earmarked for a COVID-19 Recovery Fund in order to support local residents throughout the remainder of the pandemic which was positive.

The Leader and Cabinet Members had worked tirelessly to improve the situation.

The original report providing detail to the proposals considered by the Cabinet was appended in order to provide Members with sufficient knowledge to agree the proposals.

Resolved:- (1) That the updated financial position as detailed in the report be noted.

(2) That the updated Capital Programme as set out in paragraphs 2.76 to 2.79 of the report to Cabinet on 19th July, 2021 and Appendices 1 to 4 be approved.

Mover: - Councillor Alam

Seconder: - Councillor Read

78. APPOINTMENT OF AN ADDITIONAL INDEPENDENT (CO-OPTED MEMBER) TO THE POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

Consideration was given to the report which sought agreement to the proposal to appoint a third independent member to the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel as a necessary means of ensuring constitutionally secured consistency in the membership of the Panel. A third independent (co-opted) member would support the membership of Elected Members from across the four South Yorkshire Districts and three independent (co-opted) members recruited by advertisement.

In addition to an application to the Secretary of State, the proposal for an extra independent (co-opted) member required a change to the Police and Crime Panel's arrangements and these have to be approved by the four District Councils. This decision should be unanimous across all four Districts to proceed.

Resolved:- That the Police and Crime Panel's decision taken on 20th September 2021 to commence the process to appoint a third independent (co-opted) member be approved.

Mover: - Councillor Haleem

Seconder: - Councillor Alam

79. AMENDMENTS TO APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND PANELS

Further to Minute No. 15 to the annual meeting of Council held on 26th May, 2021 consideration was given to the report which provided suggestions on amendments to the nomination of Members to serve on Committees, Boards and Panels.

Resolved:- (1) That the following amendments be confirmed:-

Adoption Panel:

Councillor Pitchley to be appointed.

Fostering Panel:

Councillor Pitchley to be appointed.

Health Select Commission:

Councillor Hughes to be removed.

Councillor Keenan to be appointed.

Improving Places Select Commission:

Councillor Keenan to be removed.

Councillor Hughes to be appointed.

Rotherham Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE):

Councillor Haleem to be removed.

Councillor Keenan to be appointed.

Mover: - Councillor Read

Seconder: - Councillor Allen

80. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY UPDATE

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board presented a report that provided Council with an update of overview and scrutiny activity and the work programmes of the respective Scrutiny Commissions since the last update had been received in March, 2021.

Mover: - Councillor Clark

Seconder: - Councillor Barley

81. NOTICE OF MOTION - ONGOING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN ROTHERHAM

It was moved by Councillor Barley and seconded by Councillor Thompson that:-

This Council notes:-

- For many years Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham was serious and widespread, but largely ignored by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and South Yorkshire Police (SYP).
- Since 2014, progress has been made on many issues related to CSE, including improvements in taxi licensing.
- However, children continue to be sexually exploited in Rotherham, and girls and boys continue to be raped and trafficked by organised gangs. The model used by organised criminals has changed, with CSE linking into Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), and private vehicles being used.
- In the six months since the local elections, Councillors have passed community gathered intelligence to RMBC and SYP regarding possible grooming and CSE in numerous locations in the Borough, including Wath, Rawmarsh, Greasbrough, Clifton, and Eastwood.
- The response to this intelligence has been poor, with slow or no action taken, obstructive and confrontational attitudes from the authorities, and a continual refusal to acknowledge that due to reactive, not proactive, Council and Police approaches to CSE, the true scale of the problem in Rotherham cannot be known at present.
- Lack of community confidence in the Council and the Police continue to be significant barriers to the reporting of CSE, as individuals fear reprisals from alleged perpetrators and that no action will be taken in response to their reports. Potential whistleblowers who work for the Council similarly fear for their jobs should they speak out as they say they have been instructed by managers not to talk about CSE.

- While RMBC has performed well in Ofsted and other inspections, what matters is not that inspections are passed, but that children are protected from some of the most horrific crimes imaginable.
- In addition to these issues with current, active CSE, many survivors feel unsupported in their recoveries and targeted by social services in relation to their own children.

Therefore, we demand that the Council:-

- Acknowledges that the true scale of CSE in Rotherham is not and cannot be known at present due to reactive policies and under-reporting, and that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as in the past.
- Deliver, as a matter of urgency, proper, detailed, in-person training to Council staff and Council contractors who are in regular contact with members of the public or who work out in our communities, so that they can recognise grooming, and suspicious activities that may indicate CSE.
- Launch a comprehensive public information campaign to likewise help members of the public recognise behaviours, activities, and other signs which may indicate CSE.
- Review and improve internal procedures for handling reports and intelligence that may indicate CSE, with clear actions to be taken, deadlines for those actions, designated people responsible for taking them, and a clear escalation procedure.
- Gather and record intelligence that may or does indicate CSE in a joined-up way, including cross referencing reports to build a fuller picture, working with expert partners in the third sector to gather intelligence, and sharing all intelligence with the police.
- Takes a proactive approach to CSE, identifying and supporting children at risk and identifying people who may be perpetrators, whilst recognising that the criminal model used by perpetrators is likely to continue changing as the authorities act.
- Proactively target known and potential CSE hot spots, including but not limited to hotels, the night-time economy, parks, and gangs engaged in Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines drug dealing.
- Develop an 'exit strategy' to support children to leave CSE, and continually review the strategy to ensure that it is effective.

- Review the Council's whistleblowing policy and give consideration to improving protections for people who believe they are whistleblowing, protecting their jobs and pensions, and providing a specialist independent person to whistleblow to.
- Ensure that RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of elected members, including regular, detailed updates and regular reviews of scrutiny arrangements to ensure that they are robust.
- Give a full and unreserved apology to survivors for Council failings that extended their abuse and continue to make their recoveries difficult.
- Look at ways to improve support for survivors of CSE, with the understanding that distrust and animosity towards the Council means that for many survivors, services that are as distant and as independent as possible from the Council would be most helpful, and that due to the life-long challenges many survivors face, support needs to be individualised and long-term.
- Put pressure on South Yorkshire Police to likewise recognise that CSE is a major and continuing problem in Rotherham and elsewhere in South Yorkshire, and likewise improve their response to reports and begin to proactively target known and potential perpetrators, locations, and victims.

At this point it was moved by Councillor Read and seconded by Councillor Keenan that the motion be amended as follows:-

This Council notes:-

- For many years Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham was serious and widespread, but largely ignored by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and South Yorkshire Police (SYP).
- Since 2014, progress has been made on many issues related to CSE, including improvements in taxi licensing.
- However, children continue to be sexually exploited in Rotherham, **[DELETE:] and girls and boys continue to be raped and trafficked by organised gangs[TO HERE]**. The model used by organised criminals has changed, with CSE linking into Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), and private vehicles being used.

- In the six months since the local elections, Councillors have passed community gathered intelligence to RMBC and SYP regarding possible grooming and CSE in numerous locations in the Borough, including Wath, Rawmarsh, Greasbrough, Clifton, and Eastwood.

[DELETE:]

- *The response to this intelligence has been poor, with slow or no action taken, obstructive and confrontational attitudes from the authorities, and a continual refusal to acknowledge that due to reactive, not proactive, Council and Police approaches to CSE, the true scale of the problem in Rotherham cannot be known at present.*
- *Lack of community confidence in the Council and the Police continue to be significant barriers to the reporting of CSE, as individuals fear reprisals from alleged perpetrators and that no action will be taken in response to their reports. Potential whistleblowers who work for the Council similarly fear for their jobs should they speak out, as they say they have been instructed by managers not to talk about CSE.*
- *While RMBC has performed well in Ofsted and other inspections, what matters is not that inspections are passed, but that children are protected from some of the most horrific crimes imaginable.*
- *In addition to these issues with current, active CSE, many survivors feel unsupported in their recoveries and targeted by social services in relation to their own children. [TO HERE]*

[INSERT]

- *That many of the actions requested by the Conservative Group are already activities underway under the terms of Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership's Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation, which was considered by the Council's Cabinet in October 2019. [TO HERE]*

Therefore, we **[DELETE:] demand that the Council:-[TO HERE]**

[INSERT]

Ask that the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership considers the following proposed actions in light of the current strategy, and any further evidence provided by the Conservative Group or others, and reports back to Councillors within 3 months on any changes, amendments to that strategy or additional activities that may be appropriate in order to maintain the highest quality of services and child protection activity: [TO HERE]

- Acknowledges that the true scale of CSE in Rotherham is not and cannot be known at present due to reactive policies and under-reporting, and that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as in the past.
- Deliver, as a matter of urgency, proper, detailed, in-person training to Council staff and Council contractors who are in regular contact with members of the public or who work out in our communities, so that they can recognise grooming, and suspicious activities that may indicate CSE.
- Launch a comprehensive public information campaign to likewise help members of the public recognise behaviours, activities, and other signs which may indicate CSE.
- Review and improve internal procedures for handling reports and intelligence that may indicate CSE, with clear actions to be taken, deadlines for those actions, designated people responsible for taking them, and a clear escalation procedure.
- Gather and record intelligence that may or does indicate CSE in a joined-up way, including cross referencing reports to build a fuller picture, working with expert partners in the third sector to gather intelligence, and sharing all intelligence with the police.
- Takes a proactive approach to CSE, identifying and supporting children at risk and identifying people who may be perpetrators, whilst recognising that the criminal model used by perpetrators is likely to continue changing as the authorities act.
- Proactively target known and potential CSE hot spots, including but not limited to hotels, the night-time economy, parks, and gangs engaged in Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines drug dealing.
- Develop an 'exit strategy' to support children to leave CSE, and continually review the strategy to ensure that it is effective.
- Review the Council's whistleblowing policy and give consideration to improving protections for people who believe they are whistleblowing, protecting their jobs and pensions, and providing a specialist independent person to whistleblow to.
- Ensure that RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of elected members, including regular, detailed updates and regular reviews of scrutiny arrangements to ensure that they are robust.

- Give a full and unreserved apology to survivors for Council failings that extended their abuse and continue to make their recoveries difficult.
- Look at ways to improve support for survivors of CSE, with the understanding that distrust and animosity towards the Council means that for many survivors, services that are as distant and as independent as possible from the Council would be most helpful, and that due to the life-long challenges many survivors face, support needs to be individualised and long-term.
- Put pressure on South Yorkshire Police to likewise recognise that CSE is a major and continuing problem in Rotherham and elsewhere in South Yorkshire, and likewise improve their response to reports and begin to proactively target known and potential perpetrators, locations, and victims.

The amendment was put and carried and became the substantive motion.

A recorded vote was requested.

(Members in favour of the amendment – The Mayor (Councillor Andrews), Councillors Alam, Allen, , Atkin Aveyard, Baker-Rodgers, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, Clark, Cooksey, Cowen, Cusworth, Ellis, Griffin, Haleem, Hoddinott, Hughes, Keenan, Khan, Elliott, McNeely, Monk, Pitchley, Read, Roche, Sansome, Sheppard and Wyatt)

(Members against the amendment – Councillors Bacon, Ball, Barley, Baum-Dixon, Burnett, A. Carter, C. Carter, Castledine-Dack, Collingham, Elliott, Fisher, Hague, Jones, Mills, Miro, Reynolds, Singleton, Thompson, Tinsley, Whormsley and Wooding)

The substantive motion now read:-

This Council notes:-

- For many years Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham was serious and widespread, but largely ignored by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and South Yorkshire Police (SYP).
- Since 2014, progress has been made on many issues related to CSE, including improvements in taxi licensing.
- However, children continue to be sexually exploited in Rotherham. The model used by organised criminals has changed, with CSE linking into Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), and private vehicles being used.

- In the six months since the local elections, Councillors have passed community gathered intelligence to RMBC and SYP regarding possible grooming and CSE in numerous locations in the Borough, including Wath, Rawmarsh, Greasbrough, Clifton, and Eastwood.
- That many of the actions requested by the Conservative Group are already activities underway under the terms of Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership's Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation, which was considered by the Council's Cabinet in October 2019.

Therefore, we:-

- Ask that the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership considers the following proposed actions in light of the current strategy, and any further evidence provided by the Conservative Group or others, and reports back to councillors within 3 months on any changes, amendments to that strategy or additional activities that may be appropriate in order to maintain the highest quality of services and child protection activity.
- Acknowledges that the true scale of CSE in Rotherham is not and cannot be known at present due to reactive policies and under-reporting, and that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as in the past.
- Deliver, as a matter of urgency, proper, detailed, in-person training to Council staff and Council contractors who are in regular contact with members of the public or who work out in our communities, so that they can recognise grooming, and suspicious activities that may indicate CSE.
- Launch a comprehensive public information campaign to likewise help members of the public recognise behaviours, activities, and other signs which may indicate CSE.
- Review and improve internal procedures for handling reports and intelligence that may indicate CSE, with clear actions to be taken, deadlines for those actions, designated people responsible for taking them, and a clear escalation procedure.
- Gather and record intelligence that may or does indicate CSE in a joined-up way, including cross referencing reports to build a fuller picture, working with expert partners in the third sector to gather intelligence, and sharing all intelligence with the police.

- Takes a proactive approach to CSE, identifying and supporting children at risk and identifying people who may be perpetrators, whilst recognising that the criminal model used by perpetrators is likely to continue changing as the authorities act.
- Proactively target known and potential CSE hot spots, including but not limited to hotels, the night-time economy, parks, and gangs engaged in Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines drug dealing.
- Develop an 'exit strategy' to support children to leave CSE, and continually review the strategy to ensure that it is effective.
- Review the Council's whistleblowing policy and give consideration to improving protections for people who believe they are whistleblowing, protecting their jobs and pensions, and providing a specialist independent person to whistleblow to.
- Ensure that RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of Elected Members, including regular, detailed updates and regular reviews of scrutiny arrangements to ensure that they are robust.
- Give a full and unreserved apology to survivors for Council failings that extended their abuse and continue to make their recoveries difficult.
- Look at ways to improve support for survivors of CSE, with the understanding that distrust and animosity towards the Council means that for many survivors, services that are as distant and as independent as possible from the Council would be most helpful, and that due to the life-long challenges many survivors face, support needs to be individualised and long-term.
- Put pressure on South Yorkshire Police to likewise recognise that CSE is a major and continuing problem in Rotherham and elsewhere in South Yorkshire, and likewise improve their response to reports and begin to proactively target known and potential perpetrators, locations, and victims.

On being put to the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

A recorded vote was requested.

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(Members in favour of the substantive motion – The Mayor (Councillor Andrews), Councillors Alam, Allen, Atkin Aveyard, Bacon, Baker-Rodgers, Ball, Barley, Baum-Dixon, Beck, Bennett-Sylvester, Bird, Brookes, Browne, Burnett, A. Carter, C. Carter, Castledine-Dack, Clark, Collingham, Cooksey, Cowen, Cusworth, Elliott, Ellis, Fisher, Griffin, Hague, Haleem, Hoddinott, Hughes, Jones, Keenan, Khan, Lelliott, McNeely, Mills, Miro, Monk, Pitchley, Read, Reynolds, Roche, Sansome, Sheppard, Singleton, Thompson, Tinsley, Whormsley, Wooding and Wyatt)

82. STANDARDS AND ETHICS COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Standards and Ethics Committee be adopted.

In doing so the Chair pointed out the meeting was on the 16th September but Parish Councillor Buckley and Parish Councillor Carroll were not confirmed as members of the Panel until the 29th September at Full Council. They were asked to leave before consideration of confidential items.

Mover:- Councillor McNeely

Seconder:- Councillor Griffin

83. AUDIT COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Baker-Rodgers

Seconder:- Councillor Browne

84. HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Roche

Seconder:- Councillor Cusworth

85. PLANNING BOARD

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of the Planning Board be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Atkin

Seconder:- Councillor Bird

86. STAFFING COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meetings of the Staffing Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Alam

Seconder:- Councillor Allen

87. LICENSING BOARD AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Resolved:- That the reports, recommendations and minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Board Sub-Committee be adopted.

Mover:- Councillor Ellis

Seconder:- Councillor Hughes

88. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO DESIGNATED SPOKESPERSONS

(1) Councillor Hoddinott asked in the wake of Sarah Everard's awful murder, were the Panel scrutinising South Yorkshire Police's approach to violence against women and girls?

Councillor Haleem responded and confirmed that in the Police and Crime Plan 2021-22, this was a priority under Protecting Vulnerable People.

In 2021 the number of incidents of violence against women and girls was shocking. Rape and sexual offences were amongst some of the most serious and high impact crimes against a person and victims needed to have the confidence to come forward and report to the police. The Government had published a National Strategy aimed at tackling Violence against Women and Girls (published July 2021) which highlighted four key areas namely: Prioritising Prevention, Supporting Victims, Pursuing Perpetrators and Strengthening the System.

The Police and Crime Commissioner convened a round table with partners to ensure that everything was being done. The Police and Crime Commissioner strongly believed that women and girls in South Yorkshire had the right to feel safe in public spaces and in their own homes. Children and young people should also feel safe in schools and educational settings.

The Police and Crime Commissioner wanted the Police and partners to focus their activity in this area on preventative action, education and safety messages to potential victims as well as work with the perpetrators of violence. He had applied for Home Office funding through the Safer Streets Fund to achieve some of these things, but, he also wanted his office and the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to lead work with the Police and partners to influence changes in attitudes, especially the attitudes of men and boys in South Yorkshire to women and girls, their notions of masculinity and who they looked to as role models.

Councillor Haleem would be ensuring that the Panel received a copy of the strategy to scrutinise it and ensure that the response was as robust as possible.

In a supplementary question Councillor Hoddinott asked whether the Panel could receive a report into the Police's approach to drink spiking and injections in South Yorkshire.

Councillor Haleem responded the Panel would be asking for the report and confirmed South Yorkshire Police had had reports of drink spiking and also the use of injections in all districts, though principally in Sheffield with its bigger night time economy, but not big numbers.

The reports were mainly from females but some males had also reported. At present it has not been possible to identify any drug used. All were being investigated and victims supported.

South Yorkshire Police were working with partners, including the Violence Reduction Unit, NHS, licensing bodies etc. and venues were being contacted since they also had a role.

The national Police lead was DCC Jason Harwin, former District Commander for Rotherham.

89. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND CHAIRPERSONS

(1) Councillor Ball withdrew his question.

(2) Councillor Whormsley referred to moving into the colder months and residents looking to prepare for winter found it hard to understand where winter grit bins were located so asked would the Council please publish a list of winter grit bins and their locations.

Councillor Beck explained there were over 400 grit bins placed around the Borough and the locations were already published on the Council's website.

The location of grit bins could be found under the "find a grit bin near you" section on the Council's website. An A to Z of records allows Councillors and residents to bring up a full list of locations.

(3) Councillor Castledine-Dack explained that in Dinnington people were very disappointed with the outcome of the bid for the Levelling Up Fund, which would have been transformative if successful. As a community, Dinnington needs to regroup whilst keeping up the momentum behind this campaign. She asked would the Council commit to review and resubmit a stronger bid when feedback was received?

Councillor Lelliott explained that the Council welcomed the successful outcome of two of the Levelling Up Fund submissions that had secured almost £40m for schemes across the Borough. The Cabinet Member shared the disappointment that the Principal Areas for Growth application did not secure the much-needed investment for projects in Wath and Dinnington.

At this time the Council was unable to speculate why it did not meet the Government's assessment criteria and further feedback was awaited from Government which would be reviewed whilst waiting details of future Levelling Up Funding rounds.

In a supplementary question Councillor Castledine-Dack asked if the Cabinet Member would commit to working with the Dinnington Community Land Trust and the Town Council whose work was instrumental in delivering this bid.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed she would work within the processes laid down to secure this.

(4) Councillor Bennett-Sylvester asked could the Cabinet Member please account for the differences in the percentage of households subscribing to the brown bin tax between our most and least deprived Wards?

Councillor Beck pointed out the Council did not operate a brown bin tax.

There would always be differences in different areas in terms of a Garden Waste Collection Service and this could be for a number of reasons including whether residents had gardens or not. Households without gardens were higher in number in the more deprived Wards so it was expected subscriptions to be lower in those areas.

In a supplementary question Councillor Bennett-Sylvester had looked at figures for the most deprived Wards of take-up between 15% and 65% taking out almost 30% and asked if a flat rate could be applied. This recharge was discriminative and exclusive against poorer communities and asked if, as part of the Local Government settlement, ways could be considered where communities were excluded and what the impact of a dual rate would be for this Council.

Councillor Beck expressed his sympathies, but pointed out that a review of Rothercard was to take place and Councillor Bennett-Sylvester may wish to raise his concerns in that forum to see what could be done for those most deprived.

(5) Councillor Reynolds asked would the Council assure the Council Tax payers of Rotherham that the Forge Island hotel would be a profitable venture by a private company and receive no subsidies or other preferential help from RMBC.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed a long lease had been agreed on market terms with Travelodge for the Forge Island development. Travelodge had no expectation of receiving a subsidy for its operations and there were no provisions in the agreement that would allow such a subsidy to be paid. The hotel would operate as a wholly private venture.

In a supplementary question Councillor Reynolds asked about the long-term future of a hotel which was dependent on its own success and booking rates and, therefore, asked for confirmation that it would not receive a penny in subsidy from the Council.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed there would be no subsidies.

(6) Councillor Reynolds asked was MAGNA still in debt to RMBC if so, how long had this situation existed and how much was owed.

Councillor Alam explained that as at the end of October 2021, Magna owed the Council £478,000.

This was made up of the two historic loans and there have been no loans since 2015.

Of the two loans, the Council provided a loan of £300,000 to Magna in November 2006. £110,000 of this loan had been repaid and £190,000 remained outstanding. This loan was secured against Magna's Project Office building on Sheffield Road.

The Council then provided a further loan of £250,000 in April 2015 which remained outstanding. This loan was provided within a rolling annual loan facility in place from November, 2008.

Interest was payable on the loans at Bank of England Base Rate Plus 2%. Currently £38,000 of interest was outstanding.

In a supplementary question Councillor Reynolds asked was it now £190,000 that was owed.

Councillor Alam confirmed it was.

(7) Councillor Ball withdrew his question.

(8) Councillor Baum-Dixon asked about the Bulky Item Collection Service in the Borough which was currently falling short of its SLA to collect items within ten days. He asked what actions were being taken to improve the Service and did the Cabinet Member think the level of service delivered was value for money for the taxpayer and justified the higher cost than other Bulky Collection services in Sheffield and Bassetlaw?

Councillor Beck confirmed the Bulky Item Collection Service was unfortunately currently working slightly behind target to collect items within ten workings days, with items currently being booked for collection within thirteen working days.

During the Covid-19 pandemic demand for the Bulky Item Collection Service had increased significantly. This had been exacerbated by the well-documented shortage of driving staff and a shortage of vehicles

available for hire, due to shortages of components for manufacturing vehicles. This had made it challenging to increase resources to bring the Service back within the ten days target time.

The Council were working hard to get additional resource and were confident that the Service would be back within the ten days target by the end of the year.

In a supplementary question Councillor Baum-Dixon pointed out that according to the Advertiser following an FOI request, comparisons of fly tipping of 450 incidents in two months whereas the Worksop Guardian reported 300 incidents which was 30% less. He compared the incidents and charge in Bassetlaw which was 26% less than Rotherham and asked if the Cabinet Member would look at the amount charged for incidents of fly tipping and do a cost benefit analysis of the bulky waste inspection fee.

Councillor Beck did not believe the charge for residents was prohibitive. He confirmed that residents who had a Rothercard could get 50% discount. The Council would continue to consider charges made by neighbouring authorities.

(9) Councillor Castledine-Dack referred to there being several new housing developments under construction in Dinnington, predominately Wentworth Way and Oldcotes Road in Throapham. Residents on both sites report continuing problems with developers not adhering to the conditions of their planning permission and making their lives a misery. She asked what enforcement actions had been taken at these sites?

Councillor Atkin confirmed the Council's Planning Enforcement Officer as well as officers from Environmental Health and Streetscene had made numerous visits to both of these sites when reports of any breaches of conditions had been made. In accordance with the Council's adopted enforcement plan, where a breach of planning control was identified, the developer was made aware of this and the steps required to rectify the situation.

If compliance could not be secured by agreement through these initial processes, the Council would consider taking more formal action.

With regards to both of these developments, verbal warnings had been issued and a Breach of Condition Notice has been served on Taylor Wimpey, developers of the Wentworth Way site, in respect of breaches of construction hours as set out in the Construction Management Plan.

In a supplementary question Councillor Castledine-Dack confirmed, having spoken to residents at these sites, and accepted enforcement action had taken place, but there was still a strong feeling this was not where it needed to be. She asked what could the Council do to bridge the gap between residents and developments.

Councillor Atkin confirmed that with regard to the development at Wentworth Way, additional complaints had been made about mud on the road and positioning of the site cabins. Both issues had been reported to the site manager and further investigation work was being undertaken to determine if further action was required.

With regard to the development at Oldcotes Road, the main issue had been the amount of dust that was generated during dry weather. This matter was investigated and machinery brought onto site to overcome the problem. Both sites would be monitored during the construction phases to ensure continued compliance.

A planning representative attended a meeting with the local residents and Alexander Stafford M.P. on Friday, 5th November, 2021 specifically about the development at Oldcotes Road.

(10) Councillor C. Carter asked what was the Council doing to tackle anti-social behaviour on the path colloquially known as the Black Path (behind Campbell Walk) in Brinsworth?

Councillor Alam explained the Council was aware of the issue of anti-social behaviour from the path colloquially known as the Black Path towards the neighbouring residences.

Police colleagues had organized regular cycle patrols and plain clothes patrols and in addition, work had been done in local schools, with individual children and their families in relation to the throwing of fireworks. Although officers believed issues had reduced slightly, they did continue to work with residents to try and resolve the issues fully.

The issue had also been discussed at the Community Action Partnership with Council officers and colleagues from South Yorkshire Police and a plan was being produced. Officers were considering increased lighting and CCTV to try to address the issue, but both have difficulties in terms of cost and vandalism as the path was secluded in places.

Any ideas or proposals were welcomed to feed into the development of a plan taking into account the physical challenges.

In a supplementary question Councillor C. Carter asked why the cameras previously funded by Brinsworth Ward Councillors had been removed, if there was a plan and what were the timescales associated with this.

Councillor Alam would seek information from officers and would contact Councillor C. Carter after this meeting.

(11) Councillor Miro asked did the Council have any extra/additional activities planned in view of the COP 26 Climate Change Summit and did it have in place any mechanisms to implement any relevant recommendations that come out from that conference?

Councillor Lelliott explained COP 26 was a meeting of the World Leaders where hopefully global agreements were developed with individual countries agreeing specific contributions.

The outcomes of the conference this week were awaited as to complete set of commitments being made by the UK Government.

(12) Councillor Ball withdrew his question.

(13) Councillor Reynolds asked how long would it take to complete the block paving outside the old Burton's Tailoring building, how much did the work cost and how was it an improvement on what was already there.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed the new public realm works in College Street would be complete by the end of November 2021. This was one of three projects within the first phase of Public Realm improvement.

The College Street project was estimated to cost just over £1 million including all design costs.

The works included an entire replacement of all the hardstanding surfaces, as well as the addition of improved and varied seating provision, additional parking spaces in close proximity to the town centre, as well as making a raised area more accessible for users in wheelchairs and those using prams.

In a supplementary question Councillor Reynolds confirmed he regularly passed and had seen several crews working on a Sunday evening so asked why was it so imperative that work took place so late and at what rate on a Sunday evening at nearly midnight.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed that this was a private contract so it was up to the sub-contractor when they worked and how they paid their staff.

(14) Councillor Castledine-Dack referred to speeding vehicles becoming more problematic as traffic volumes were increasing post-lockdowns, especially at School Road in Laughton-en-le-Morthen and Outgang Lane in Laughton Common. She asked what steps could the Council take to make these roads safer and would they commit to improving safety along them before anyone was hurt or worse?

Councillor Beck explained that at School Road in Laughton-en-le-Morthen through the Neighbourhood Road Safety Programme, a scheme had been developed to install a central refuge where the speed limit changed (where School Road met Hangsman Lane) to create a 'gateway effect' on the approach to the School. This should help to regulate vehicle speeds in this area and would build on the School's 20 mph signage that was installed in 2017 which indicated to drivers that they should not exceed 20 mph when the lights were flashing.

Whilst there were no other proposals for School Road at this time, concerns about speeding traffic would be noted for consideration for funding should they arise in the near future. In the meantime, School Road would be added to the list of sites for future deployment of a Vehicle Activated Sign.

Regarding Outgang Lane, over recent years a number of road safety improvements have been made such as yellow highlight backing for the 30 mph signage, a gateway feature near Station Way, a zebra crossing, a Vehicle Activated Sign and pedestrian refuges, together with developer improvements such as the roundabout at Knavesmire Avenue.

Recent mobile enforcement by the Safety Camera Partnership detected 39 offences in 1½ hour attendance on site and this stretch of road would remain on their list of sites to target in the future.

(15) Councillor Miro asked what was the Council's experience of working with landowners in big housing projects such as Harworth for example?

Councillor Lelliott confirmed the development at Waverley was the largest single residential development dealt with by this Council. The outline planning permission was granted in 2011 for 3,890 houses and lasted for thirty years allowing the developer to submit details of the houses as they came forward for development on each smaller parcel of land. To enable this to happen, the Planning Team had provided a dedicated officer to work alongside Harworth's as a single point of contact and to ensure that the vision and quality that was built into the outline permission was delivered over the lifetime of the scheme.

In a supplementary question Councillor Miro explained over the last few months he had had a variety of communication with Harworth. He was not criticizing them, but found the communication variable. This had been not so good over the last month or two in terms of complaints, especially with the loss of a community organization first shop where those involved had decided to stop progressing a mechanism of improving communication with Harworth.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed she would go back to officers to see if she could arrange a meeting of the community liaison group and contact Councillor Miro by email accordingly.

(16) Councillor Baum-Dixon referred to last week when children attending Dinnington High School, who lived in Woodsetts, were stranded on at least two occasions when the 19A bus did not arrive. This left children as young as eleven, in the dark unable to get home. The walk to Woodsetts was rural roads with no footpaths or streetlights. He asked did the Cabinet Member agree that this was totally unacceptable?

Councillor Beck confirmed the Number 19 and 19a bus routes were provided by Stagecoach Services. The service failures have been attributed to the current market conditions - shortage of bus drivers due to the current pressure on supply chains for HGV drivers and warehouse staff, creating a migration of workers to better paid professions.

The Council was also seeking to understand what planning the bus operators had done to mitigate the problems, along with what efforts they had made to ensure school services were protected during periods of driver shortages. The Council would work with the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority on these matters and hoped that market conditions improved.

In a supplementary question Councillor Baum-Dixon referred to a text issued by the School only last week to parents about the dedicated bus from Woodsetts. He asked if this was a matter for RMBC and as Cabinet Member could there be a guarantee to get the dedicated service reinstated.

Councillor Beck was not sure whose responsibility this was, but would investigate this further and liaise with the School.

(17) Councillor Reynolds asked did RMBC negotiate a rent reduction with the Landlord during lockdown in Riverside and if not why not?

Councillor Lelliott explained the Council had not negotiated a rent reduction for Riverside House during the pandemic because the building remained operational throughout, though with significantly reduced staff use and the public areas closed.

During lockdown the Community Hub operated a food bank from the building and a number of key worker staff required continued access such the multi-agency safeguarding hub, Registrars and IT.

Since the lifting of restrictions, the public areas of Riverside House had re-opened and more staff were attending as part of the new Hybrid working arrangements.

In a supplementary question Councilor Reynolds referred to the whole country negotiating with landlords and mortgage providers during the pandemic. This was a new era with new attitudes so why, if the building was not fully occupied, had the Council not negotiated a reduction for Riverside House in an attempt or at least tried to get hard earned council tax back.

Councillor Lelliott confirmed the building was operational throughout the pandemic and had been the Council's headquarters with 1,925 food parcels being delivered and 550 people asking for loneliness services. It was morally right the building was open to support them.

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90. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items for consideration.